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A PLEA FOR CONTINUED EFFORT.*

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The labors, the liberality, and the prayers of the friends of African Colonization have not been in vain. The history of Liberia furnishes abundant cause for thanksgiving to God, and also abundant encouragement to constant and vigorous effort to add to the numbers and resources of that important Commonwealth.

Of the ends sought to be attained by the establishment of a colony on the Western Coast of Africa, the three most important were—

1. The elevation of those free colored men in the United States who were willing to emigrate.
2. Increased facilities for introducing into Western Africa the Gospel with all its attendant blessings.
3. The suppression of the slave trade.

The attainment of these results was justly deemed, by the founders and the early friends of the American Colonization Society, to be a matter of the highest moment to the welfare of our own land, and one of untold blessings to Africa.

By the overthrow of slavery in the United States, the West Indies, and in most of the South American States, *the suppression of the slave trade* has been in a great measure, if not entirely, attained; and therefore it can no longer be urged as one of the strongest reasons for establishing, on the Western Coast of Africa, a free and independent government opposed to the existence of the slave trade, under every form of it. But the other reasons for continuing and completing this grand undertaking remain in nearly all their strength. For although considerable has been done for the elevation of the emigrants and first settlers in Liberia, and for the instruction of the barbarous tribes within the limits of her jurisdiction, this part of our work is far from being complete. From the very necessity of the case, success in these matters must have been limited; yet sufficient has already been accomplished to make us know that our scheme is a feasible one, and that we shall not fail, if trusting in God we continue firm and resolute in the prosecution of our important aims.

* An Address by Rev. JOHN MACLEAN, D. D., of Princeton, New Jersey, delivered at a meeting of the Connecticut Colonization Society, held at Hartford, June 1, 1869.

We have here in the United States, at this very time, thousands, not to say hundreds of thousands, whose condition would be altered for the better, and whose elevation would be greatly promoted, were they to go to Liberia and engage in the work of strengthening the only Government in the world under which they can have all the rights, privileges, and social position of intelligent freemen.

By the laws of the United States, the freedmen who remain here may have conferred upon them all the civil rights and privileges of citizens; but there is one thing which the laws cannot give them, viz, *equality with the whites in social position*. This is a matter in regard to which the laws are powerless. Yet *this* every generous and noble mind among them must account a matter of far greater moment to themselves and their children than any mere civil rights or privileges. It may be said, perhaps truly said, that this repugnance on the part of the whites to social equality with the colored race has its foundation not so much in reason as in prejudice and feeling. Yet it is so general and so strong, more especially with those classes of the whites which approach nearest in social position to the colored race, that it will require generations to eradicate it. And in the meantime what is to become of the more intelligent of the colored people if they continue with us? For party purposes, a few offices may be given them, and a few of the better educated and of the more refined among them, may possibly find access to the society of the refined and educated among the whites; but, in general, they will continue to occupy very subordinate positions. And where is the best place to train them for works of high and noble daring? I venture to affirm that the mere fact of their going abroad, and of their engaging in efforts to elevate themselves, and to prepare the way for the general elevation of their race, would be the most efficacious means of educating them, not merely by imparting to them new ideas, but mainly by enlarging and strengthening their intellectual and moral powers.

Let us suppose the problem to be solved to be this, viz: In what way can the intelligent and religious portion of the colored people in the United States best promote, and in the shortest time, the elevation of those of their own color? I have no hesitation in saying, that they can best do it by combining their efforts with those of the good men already in Liberia, to make that Commonwealth a power and a name among the nations of the earth. Let this be done. Let Liberia

once become the abode of a nation, versed in all the arts of civilized life, trained in the doctrines of revealed truth, devoted to agricultural and commercial pursuits, causing its power to be felt at home and abroad, laboring to promote the happiness of all subject to its control, or within the reach of its influence. What would so effectually dissipate all prejudice against their race in our own land as the existence of an independent, intelligent, and powerful Commonwealth consisting of men of the colored race? The answer is obvious. Let us then encourage all who are disposed to go to Liberia to do so, and to aid them in going, provided they be persons of fair character at home. We shall do *them* a service, we shall do Africa a service, and we shall also render an important service to those who remain here. It is but a small number comparatively who can go—the great mass of the colored race must remain here for years, and, perhaps, for generations.

There are those who regard themselves as statesmen and philanthropists, and who object to any of the negro race leaving this country for Liberia, on the ground that they are wanted here for *laborers*. But as mere cultivators of the soil, cannot those who go to Liberia render a service to the United States, by their fostering in Africa a traffic or commerce, which will yield to our country a more valuable return than if they had remained here and proved to be diligent cultivators of our own soil? Do those persons, who make the objection which we have just considered, have chiefly in view the good of the negro and the elevation of his race? or is it some other motive which prompts its utterance?

It is very desirable, for the best interests of Liberia and for the complete accomplishment of the great work which seems to be allotted to her, in the orderings of Divine Providence, that the present relative proportion between the native Africans and the American emigrants should be changed—and this can be done by sending more emigrants to Liberia, and in no other way.

The influence of the Liberian Government upon the native tribes will be augmented just in proportion to the increased power of that Government, and this, within certain limits, will be in proportion to the number of emigrants, of a fair character, sent from the United States to Liberia.

A thousand emigrants a year for a few years would add greatly to the strength of Liberia, as they could readily be absorbed without becoming a disturbing element in the political



system; and, as the power of the Government increases, the number of emigrants might also be augmented. If, within the next ten years, ten or fifteen thousand emigrants, of the character before mentioned, should become citizens of Liberia, an impulse would be given to Liberian energy that would tell with tremendous power upon the surrounding tribes, and open the way for our Missionary Societies to extend their operations among the natives within the limits of Liberia and the adjacent regions.

The more the natives see and feel of the power which education imparts to the body of the emigrants established on their shores, the more ready and the more desirous will they become to receive among themselves those who can teach them and their children. And for one I am prepared to bid "God speed" to all who think that they ought to do more than they are now doing for the furtherance of piety and of sound elementary instruction among the citizens of Liberia and their children. But this alone will not enable us to accomplish all the good at which the early friends of the American Colonization Society aimed. This is good and even necessary to the full attainment of our aims; but of itself it is not and never can be sufficient. More of a foreign element is needed to give increased energy to the efforts which should be made for the elevation of both the emigrants and the natives.

Can there be any doubt that, just in proportion to her increase in numbers and wealth, and knowledge and piety, the power of Liberia to elevate the natives will be augmented, and that the Missionary Societies will be aided in their efforts to send the Gospel and civilization to the tribes whose territories are most readily approached through Liberia. It is not necessary that the Government should take a direct and an active agency in such missionary operations. Our own Government does nothing of this kind, yet who does not know that our increase in numbers and wealth has enabled the Christians in the United States to send abroad hundreds of missionaries, and to support schools for the education of the heathen youth in foreign lands? And we may depend upon the Christian citizens of Liberia to do all in their power to send the Gospel to all within their reach. Then let the friends of education and of missions help to strengthen the Government of Liberia, by aiding to send to her shores all who are desirous to emigrate and to take up their abode in that land of refuge, provided they be persons of the right sort.



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